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CRITICISMS AND DISCUSSIONS

THE REALISM OF TONGIORGI

IN THESE DAYS of interest in what is called the New Realism, and its dealings with Being as wider than Reality, it is of interest to recall the positions of that distinguished thinker of last century, Tongiorgi on some of the issues now engaging attention. This particular purpose is the reason for my not discussing certain matters in Tongiorgi, such as the *sensus fundamentalis* described by him and by Rosmini, and critically reviewed by certain scholastic writers of distinction. The moderate-minded Scholasticism of Tongiorgi gives him the greater claim on our attention.

In his "Institutiones Philosophicae" (3 vols., Rome, 1861), Tongiorgi says: "Whatever is conceived as having some reality (*aliquam realitatem*), is conceived either as actually existing, or at least after the manner of something existing; for it is such that there is in it no repugnance to existence. Nay, more, by the very fact of its being an object of thought, it has a certain existence"—of the ideal or 'intentional' order, as he goes on to explain (Vol. II, *Ontol.*, p. 8). Further on, he says: "Whatever has some reality, by which it can be an object of thought, has it either as existing, extra-mental (*extra mentem*) reality, or as not existing, but capable of becoming existent." This latter is *en in potentia* or *possible*, the former is *ens in actu* or *existens* (p. 23). This discrimination of ideal being is not really new, as often supposed, having had explicit recognition at least as far back as the time of Wyclif and Occam; neither is it, I would add, a discrimination peculiar to Scholastic philosophers, but made by many other philosophers, especially, but not exclusively, by those of realistic turn. They have held that whatever thought must be thought as though it had being or existence, and that possible being must be thought, as it would be, if it existed. That is to say, it must be thought under the attribute of existence.

Even Bradley has spoken of what "is real either inside of our heads or outside of them. And thus it always stands for exists." But I must leave others aside, as I have elected to speak of Tongiorgi.

Of the wide comprehension of Being opened by the recognition of ideal being, Tongiorgi says the *ens in potentia* or possible essence is privative in character, and belongs to the intelligible and metaphysical order, not to the order physical and actual. As later realists would say, it subsists, not exists. Possibility is, to Tongiorgi, "intrinsic" or "extrinsic." Intrinsic possibility is where there exists no repugnance to being in the constitutive nature of the thing, as, e. g., the possibility of a statue of gold. Intrinsic impossibility means a contradiction, that is, in its constitution, as, e. g., a quadrilateral triangle. Extrinsic possibility exists where there is fit or suitable cause to produce the thing, as, e. g., the possibility of a statue by an artificer. Intrinsic possibility is absolute, having no limit but contradiction; extrinsic possibility is relative. "Adequate" possibility embraces both (II, *Ontol.*, p. 27). Elsewhere, Tongiorgi says that intrinsic repugnance means metaphysical impossibility (Vol. I, *Log.*, p. 225). Thus the unreal becomes reduced to what is intrinsically impossible, or to what has no existence outside our minds, for which latter he claims, as we have seen, a certain ideal being as an object of thought. As present day realists would say, it has being, not existence, as being timeless. Tongiorgi's discussion of possibility is in keeping with the unwonted, but merited, attention devoted to this subject by many Scholastic philosophers. Not that appreciation of the category of possibility has been confined to the Scholastics, for others, like Leibniz and Weisse, have made high use of possibility. Thus Bertrand Russell speaks of philosophy as "the science of the possible," as an "inventory of possibilities," and as a "repertory of abstractly tenable hypotheses." But is not this, it might naturally be asked, to assume for the knowledge of abstractions a higher dignity than for knowledge of the world in which we live? Is it not to assume an all too complete independence for purely conceptual entities and thought-possibilities? The concept is not a quid or simple entity which can be apprehended immediately outside us, in the mode assumed, without any need of involved mental process in the unity of a consciousness. Consciousness is not an aggregate of facts that are only exteriorly connected. The concrete unity of the conscious subject is involved in every act of thought, however simple. Can we so easily discard or shuffle

off the world of experience for a hypothetical world of ideas, conceived as in complete independence of the former? It has been the precise and peculiar claim of moderate realism—which strikes me as having been marked by great good sense in realisms of the past—that it keeps the most abstract metaphysical speculation in wholesome contact with the actual world in which we live and move and have our being. Being, not possibility, was the primal idea to Tongiorgi, who maintained that the notion of possibility is an efflorescence of our knowledge of things existing.

I may here notice Tongiorgi's discussion of the objective reality of ideas. To him the first idea is that of entity. First principles are formed from this idea. From these first principles ideas are, in upspringing of experience, acquired or formed. The objective reality of the ideas either immediately follows, or, can at least he thinks, be demonstrated. His position as to the objective reality of ideas is that a thing, which is an object of the mind, is an entity (*aliquid ens*—I, Log., p. 278). For what, he asks, is the *ratio* of entity, if not thing and object? He thinks that if ideas lacked this objective value (*objectivus idearum valor*), the first principles also would be inane. Such a theory of ideas is a long anticipation of certain recent theories; it differs, equally with Russell's, from Plato's theory of ideas, which Russell calls "one of the most successful attempts hitherto made," in that it posits no simple reminiscence of the ideas, but a direct apprehension of them.

Relation, Tongiorgi distinguishes as real, and as logical. He thinks real relation exists between things independently of the thinking or comparing power of the intellect. He instances, in this exteriority of relations, the relation of cause and effect. Logical relation is made by the intellect, as in the case of the relation of identity with itself. Of things logically identical, one can be affirmed of the other; but this affirmability does not obtain in the case of real identity. He thinks it the mark of real relations that they exist in the nature of things. The whole order, harmony and beauty of the world exist for him as real relations. When things are really identical, he says, that means they are really relative, are really opposed, and so far are really distinguished. Identity differs, in his view, from unity, which is absolute. In that identity is relative, as supposing *plura* which, compared *inter se*, are reduced to a certain unity. In real identity, two things which are identical with a third according to a common concept, are identical *inter se* according to

this very concept. In logical identity, two concepts which are identical with a third according to the object, are identical *inter se* according to this very object. But I doubt whether Tongiorgi would have countenanced the tendency to erect the logical independence of two facts into their real separation, or to treat two terms and the relation between them as separate entities. Moderate realism, at any rate, has not regarded the formal element in relation—its *esse ad*—as a distinct and separate reality. Tongiorgi retains a very clear sense of whatever is *mera distinctio rationis*. It is one thing to distinguish, in the course of experience, forms and qualities, and another thing to erect these into separate entities. Tongiorgi holds, as objects of the intellect, not only the essences of substances, but the essences of the qualities of substances, adding that such qualities are *quaedam entia*, and have their own essence (III. *Psychol.*, p. 162). The context shows that such matters as color, sound and figure, are what he has in mind. But although he takes *omne ens*, which is the object of intellect, in a wide sense, he goes on to say that, nevertheless, what is offered "*primo ac per se*" to the intellect, is, the essence of external objects or material things. He does not, however, wish acts of the knowing subject to be excluded, but points out that it is by the intellect these become object. Thus he differentiates. Distinguish as we may and must the various and diverse aspects of reality, we yet cannot separate or rend them asunder, but must hold them in the living synthesis of thought, the concrete unity of consciousness. This is the unity of reason, "quae universaliū propria est, nec extra mentem invenitur in rebus, sed fit a ratione per cognitionem abstractivam et comparativam." (II, *Ontol.*, p. 45.)

Finally, as to the criterion of truth in Tongiorgi's realism. Truth is, to him, in true Scholastic fashion, an equation or the conformity of thought to thing. In a way that strongly reminds one of Aristotle, he takes evidence to be the criterion of truth.¹ Evidence, he says, may be immediate or mediate, may be absolute or hypothetical, for evidence does not pertain only to *a priori* truths. He explains that not ideas, but only judgments, are to be spoken of as evident, for ideas are not objects that we perceive. A judgment is called evident, in so far as it is objectively regarded. What is evident is true, he holds, precisely as certain other Scholastic philosophers have done. Evidence is taken to be the universal criterion of truth—

¹ Cf. my Discussion: "Aristotle and the Criterion of Truth," in THE MONIST, July, 1921.

atque ultimum certitudinis motivum (I, Log., p. 361). He thinks this *quod est evidens* better than the *quod clare et distincte* of Descartes, with its vagueness and indefiniteness. Error, Tongiorgi thinks, is in the judgment; not in the senses, nor in intellectual apprehension. Falsity is the object of error—falsity under the guise or appearance of truth. He follows that notable metaphysician Suarez, in thinking that the intellect is not necessarily determined in its judgment, save by the evidence, and evidence cannot obey false judgment. The intellect can only be so determined by the will, when it is not free. Hence, he holds that every error has its origin in a free movement of the will. He thus puts a severe strain or responsibility upon the will. This idea has not been wholly absent from recent discussions on error, but it is safe to say that, neither in criticism, nor in furtherance of it, has this line of thought been so fully worked out as it could very well be.

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